

## BOB BOWMAN'S EAST TEXAS

## Civil War experiences well documented by soldier

In early 1861, W.W. Heartsill of Marshall marched to war with W.P. Lane's Rangers of the Confederate Army.

During the four years, one month and one day he spent at war, Heartsill managed to keep a diary of each day.

Throughout his service, he carried with him a small memorandum book with this notation on the flyleaf: "If I am killed, or if by any mishap this book is lost, please send it to my father, A. Heartsill, Louisville, East Tennessee."

When Heartsill filled up one of the books, he sent it home to Marshall for safe-

keeping.

"Scores of times, I was as wet as water could make me, as these books bear evidence. Sometimes my book would come all to pieces after a soaking, and as it was being written with a pencil, I had to retrace with a pen when the opportunity was offered."

Heartsill journals are mirrors of camp life and the trials and pleasures he endured as a private in the Confederate ranks.

When he came home, he began printing the pages of his diaries, completing the work in 1876.

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In November 1861, Heartsill wrote: "Today, we attended the funeral of a soldier, a solemn, sad duty."

On Sunday, July 11, Heartsill wrote that Confederate and Union troops clashed near the Arkan-

sas River with only 4,000 Confederate soldiers facing "70,000 of the Yanks." During the battle, the Confederates' hospital was set afire, "killing two of our surgeons and a wounded man who was being operated upon by the surgeons."

"Such agony, such, such horror and so many deaths; how many of our brave comrades perished in this

frightful tragedy, heaven alone will reveal."

During the battle, Heartsill wrote that Lane's Rangers "are not recognized as Confederate soldiers, but will be treated as guerrillas from the fact that we are an independent company."

On July 12, Heartsill wrote, "Oh, how hungry we are." He said, "We all are supplied with a liberal breakfast composed entirely of river water."

At noon, he said, "We receive the same for dinner that we got for breakfast" and in the evening, the Rangers finally got "a

good supply of fat bacon and hard tack, which is the only food that we have had for 84 hours."

The Rangers were captured by the Union troops and loaded aboard a ship with Arkansas soldiers.

"Every man is looking for news about an exchange (for Yankee soldiers held by the South)."

Heartsill made it through the war and he and his fellow soldiers were mustered out of service on May 20, 1865, in Harrison County.

Bob Bowman is author of more than 40 books about East Texas.

## KAPPA PI CHAPTER

## Meeting focuses on patriotism

The Kappa Pi Chapter of The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International focused on patriotism for its March 4 meeting in Lindy Goode's home in Tyler.

The guest speaker, Kim Yelas, shared her story about how she and her missionary parents lived in the Philippines and fled from the Japanese during World War II.

For three months, they lived in a hidden cabin. After that, they hid in the jungle, moving every day or every night for 18 months while 200 soldiers searched for them.

Yelas learned her ABCs and her numbers from a pack of cards and the Bible. Every morning, she woke up to look for her pet chicken's egg, her breakfast.

When the Japanese finally found them, she remembers they sat her on a tree stump and cut her long, curly hair with a rice bowl on her head.

Yelas marked her third, fourth, and fifth birthdays in a POW camp. The teachers there organized a school for the children.

But they had no books, no pencils and no supplies. However, the children

learned from the teachers, and Yelas has a tiny, framed kindergarten diploma from the camp.

For her fifth birthday, she wanted a doll. Her mother got ticking from one woman who had a mattress, traded potato skins for colored embroidered floss, got yarn from a nurse for the hair and got some sheer material from someone who had a ballerina costume.

The diploma, a doll, and a knitted Christmas stocking are the only items she saved from the camp. When they were set free, Yelas remembers being afraid of the big American soldiers who tossed her up into the air.

Yelas displayed beautiful woven baskets and wood carvings from the Philippines as well as a sample of the colorful cloth the women wear for skirts.

She had a large map to point out the western border of the U.S., the Hawaiian islands where Pearl Harbor was bombed, the Philippines, and Japan.

Following the program, Benita Carver led the group in singing, "You're a Grand Old Flag," and "God Bless America."

## PULSE OF EDMOM

Gentlemen, start your engine. It's time for Cruise Night in Edom.

March 20 revs up the fourth year of this tradition after its break over the winter months.

Owners of all classic, unusual or rare cars are invited to participate on the third Saturday of each month through October.

Starting around 6 p.m. (sometimes earlier), the cars begin to arrive and line both sides of the street along the downtown Edom arts district.

Hoods are raised, chrome is polished, T-shirt sleeves are rolled up, and everyone gets ready for this family-oriented "good time" evening.

By the time all the parking spots are filled, there are typically between 40 and 50 cars, a huge increase from the 10 or so cars that participated when the idea was first conceived.

Entertainment abounds through 8 p.m., but many folks stay later, especially when the weather is nice. There is a snack area serving food and drinks, a DJ spinning music, T-shirts

and 50-50 tickets for sale, and many of the downtown Edom shops stay open late to participate in the celebration.

No admission is charged for this event and everyone is encouraged to attend whether they have a classic car or not.

A special "Mayfest" cruise night is being planned for May 15, which will include the usual activities plus a live band and dancing. Participants are encouraged to dress up in their best 50s & 60s "look" and join the fun.

While most participants are from the local area, it's common to find cars that come all the way from Longview and Dallas.

To encourage Cruise Night participation even more, each person who brings a car is entered into a special drawing.

Elsewhere in Edom, the Edom Volunteer Fire Department is having its pancake breakfast at the main Edom Fire Station on Farm-to-Market Road 279, Saturday, from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

If you haven't yet seen the



Kim Yelas

Lou Brown and Lynda McQuaid folded a flag while Naomi Bledsoe explained the meaning of a flag-draped coffin and the meaning and purpose of the 13 folds.

Hostesses Goode and Brown led the group to a beautifully appointed table with milk glass dishes and delectable sandwiches, chocolate brownies, cream cheese tidbits, nuts, candy kisses, and lime sherbet punch.

Katherine Bunce, president, presided over the business meeting that included plans for the April meeting,

election of officers for the next biennium, Alpha State Convention reservations, a treasurer's report, and details about the Founder's Day Luncheon on May 1. The door prize was won by Erma Johnson.

Read more about Yelas' experiences on Page 8.

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**To the Voters of Henderson County Precinct 3:**

I sincerely appreciate your electing me for another term. Over the last 23 years, I have had the pleasure of serving some of the finest people around, and I very much look forward to continuing as Justice of the Peace for Precinct 3. Though plenty of work remains, together, we've made progress.

Thank you, residents of Henderson County, for your vote of confidence.

And God bless.

**Sue Starnes**

Pol. Ad Pd. by Sue Starnes Campaign, Rod Starnes, Treas. P.O. Box 835, Chandler, TX 75758

## HUMANE SOCIETY OF EAST TEXAS

## PET OF THE WEEK



Meet Walker. He is an 80-pound, 2-year-old coonhound mix that's been at the Humane Society of East Texas for about a year.

He desperately needs to be adopted by a loving family. Walker is a big boy, affectionate and gentle. He would do best in a household with older children because of his size.

Walker has been neutered and is current on all of his vaccinations. Please come visit Walker. You might just fall in love with him.

The Humane Society of East Texas is a selective admission, no-kill animal sanctuary in Tyler. It is open Tuesday through Sunday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. It closes from 1 to 2 p.m. each day.

Visit hsoet.org or call 903-597-2471.